

Listing of the Claims:

Claims 1-31 (Canceled)

Claim 32. (Currently Amended): The connecting element according to claim 53
31, wherein the superelastic shape memory alloy is a nickel-titanium alloy.

Claim 33. (Previously Presented): The connecting element according to claim
32, wherein the titanium content of the nickel-titanium is between about 49.7 to 50.7
atom %.

Claim 34. (Currently Amended): The connecting element according to claim 31
53, wherein the holding force is generated by at least one of bending forces and shear
forces during an elastic expansion of the tensioning element.

Claim 35. (Canceled)

Claim 36. (Currently Amended): The connecting element according to claim 31
53, wherein the holding force is a contact pressure generated by the elastic expansion of
the tensioning element, the holding force being applied to the connected constructive
element that is inserted into the tensioning element.

Claims 37 - 52. (Canceled)

Claim 53. (Currently Amended): ~~The A~~ connecting element ~~according to claim~~
31, for mechanically connecting constructive elements in combination with at least one
constructive element, said connecting element comprising an elastically deformable

tensioning element applying a holding force in an elastically expanded state onto the at least one constructive element, thus generating a frictional connection of said at least one constructive element with at least one of said tensioning element and another constructive element,

wherein

said tensioning element has a length in the axial direction, comprises a clamping sleeve, into which the at least one constructive element is inserted in the axial direction, and comprises a spring material consisting of a superelastic shape memory alloy elastically expandable in the tensioning element, said tensioning element being in a stress-induced martensitic state to produce the holding force, and wherein the tensioning element comprises a clamping sleeve, into which the at least one constructive element to be connected is inserted in the axial direction, whereby the clamping sleeve is elastically deformed and pre-tensioned by compression in order to insert the at least one constructive element, and the clamping sleeve is partially relaxed for realizing the connection.

Claim 54. (Withdrawn): The connecting element according to claim 53, wherein the clamping sleeve has a circular cross section in the relaxed state, and an oval cross section in the pre-tensioned and in the partially relaxed state.

Claim 55. (Currently Amended): ~~The A~~ connecting element according to claim 53, for mechanically connecting constructive elements, said connecting element comprising an elastically deformable tensioning element adapted to apply a holding force in an elastically expanded state onto a constructive element that is to be connected, thus

generating a frictional connection of said constructive element with at least one of said tensioning element and another constructive element,

wherein

said tensioning element has a length in the axial direction, comprises a clamping sleeve, into which the constructive element to be connected is to be inserted in the axial direction, and comprises a spring material consisting of a superelastic shape memory alloy elastically expandable in the tensioning element, said tensioning element being in a stress-induced martensitic state to produce the holding force, and

wherein the clamping sleeve has an oval cross section in the relaxed state, a deformed state as compared to the relaxed state in the pre-tensioned state, and an oval cross section in the partially relaxed state.

Claim 56. (Withdrawn): The connecting element according to claim 53, wherein the clamping sleeve has one of an oval cross section and a circular cross section in the relaxed state, and in the pre-tensioned state, a cross section that is deformed on three sides in a radial direction of the clamping sleeve, and the clamping sleeve has a cross section arced on three sides in the partially relaxed state.

Claim 57. (Withdrawn): The connecting element according to claim 53, wherein the another constructive element is at least a second constructive element to be connected so that at least two or more constructive elements to be connected are inserted in the clamping sleeve, the at least two constructive elements being arranged parallel to each other within a section of the clamping sleeve.

Claim 58. (Previously Presented): The connecting element according to claim 53, wherein the another constructive element is at least a second constructive element to be connected so that at least two or more constructive elements to be connected are inserted in the clamping sleeve, the at least two constructive elements to be connected at least one of contact each other with their face ends in the clamping sleeve, and are oriented with their face ends facing each other.

Claims 59 - 61. (Canceled)

Claim 62. (Currently Amended): The connecting element according to claim ~~31~~ 53, wherein the constructive element to be connected is inserted in the tensioning element, and a section of the at least one constructive element to be connected that is engaged with the tensioning element is friction-increased.